

**ABSTRACT**

Method and apparatus for determining the stopping point of an iterative decoding process. In one embodiment the estimated  
5 values of an iteration of an iterative decoder are provided to a signature circuit. If the signature does not differ from the previous signature developed from a prior iteration, or the signature developed from an iteration prior to the previous iteration, the decoding stops. The variance may also be tested  
10 and compared to a threshold as a criteria to stop the iterative decoding.

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